

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 115504

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TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS FOR ROBERT ROSENSTOCK US LEGAL DIVISION

FOL REPEAT SAN JOSE 2258 ACTION SECSTATE 6 MAY.

QUOTE

S E C R E T SAN JOSE 2258

EXDIS

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: CASC, CS, PFOR, PGOV, (VESCO, ROBERT)

SUBJECT: REPORTED ARREST OF AMCIT CONCERNED WITH VESCO CASE

1. SUMMARY: PRESUMED AMERICAN CITIZEN JAMES WILKINS IS BEING HELD IN PRISON HERE. HE CLAIMS TO BE AN EMPLOYEE OF U.S. ATTORNEY ELLIOT SAGOR. CONSUL HAS NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO SEE HIM. END SUMMARY.

2. CONSUL RECEIVED TWO NOTES MAY 6 FROM PRESUMED AMCIT JAMES WILKINS WHICH ASSERT HE HAS BEEN HELD IN SAN JOSE PRISON FOR SEVEN DAYS. HE CLAIMS THAT HE WAS SENT TO SAN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 115504

JOSE BY ASSISTANT U.S. ATTORNEY ELLIOT SAGOR TO GATHER

INFORMATION ON ROBERT VESCO, AND SAYS THAT HE IS AFRAID THAT IF HE DOES NOT SIGN A FALSE CONFESSION HE WILL BE KILLED. HE REQUESTS EMBASSY TO NOTIFY MR. SAGOR AND ALSO HIS OWN FATHER IN TAMPA, FGIRIDA AT 713-6773308.

3. THESE MESSAGES WERE APPARENTLY SMUGGLED OUT OF THE PRISON AT WILKINS' REQUEST.

4. CONSUL PROCEEDED IMMEDIATELY TO CALL ON SENIOR OFFICIALS OF MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY AND TO VISIT THE PRISON, BUT HE WAS NOT ALLOWED TO SEE WILKINS. OFFICIALS WERE CLEARLY ANNOYED THAT CONSUL HAD LEARNED OF CASE AND TRIED TO DISCOURAGE HIM FROM PURSUING IT. THEY SAID THAT INVESTIGATION IS STILL PROCEEDING, THAT WILKINS MAY NOT EVEN BE AN AMERICAN CITIZEN, AND THAT HE MAY BE DEPORTED BY THIS WEEKEND. THEY SUGGESTED THAT CASE IS BEING HELD CLOSELY AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOCR.

5. AMBASSADOR RECEIVED LAST WEEK BY POUCH A "PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL" LETTER DATED APRIL 21 FROM ELLIOT SAGOR WHICH STATED THAT "SEVERAL MONTHS AGO AN AMERICAN CITIZEN WAS OFFERED A JOB BY THE PEOPLE IN WHOM WE ARE INTERESTED. WE HAVE ADVANCED THIS PERSON MONEY TO RETURN TO COSTA RICA. IF HE GETS THE JOB, HE WILL BE REPORTING BACK TO US CONCERNING FOREIGN TRAVEL. HE WILL BE ON HIS OWN DOWN THERE, AND WILL NOT REQUIRE ANY SUPPORT FROM THE EMBASSY."

5. IT SEEMS PROBABLE THAT WILKINS IS THE INDIVIDUAL ALLUDED TO BY SAGOR. THE QUESTIONABLE WISDOM OF ENGAGING HIM IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND THE POSSIBLE ADVERSE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WHOLE COURSE OF OUR VESCO CASE HERE, WILL HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED AT AN EARLY DATE. THE IMMEDIATE QUESTIONS, HOWEVER, ARE THE HANDLING OF THIS PROTECTION CASE AND THE USG RESPONSE IN THE FACE OF POSSIBLE RENEWED ALLEGATIONS (FROM THE GOCR AND/OR THE PRESS) THAT THERE HAS BEEN ATTEMPTED HARASSMENT OF VESCO IF NOT IMPROPER INTERVENTION IN COSTA RICAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY A U.S. AGENCY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 115504

YM IF APPROACHED BY SUCH A CHARGE OR QUERY, THE EMBASSY PLANS TO TAKE THE POSITION THAT IT KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT WILKINS' ALLEGED ASSOCIATION WITH ANY U.S. AGENCY. WE WILL ATTEMPT TO TREAT THIS AS A STRAIGHT CONSULAR PROTECTION CASE. THIS WILL ENTAIL NEW EFFORTS BY CONSUL ON FRIDAY MAY 7 TO SEE WILKINS.

7. WOULD APPRECIATE IMMEDIATE CONFIRMATION THAT WILKINS

IS U.S. CITIZEN AND ANY OTHER GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH
TO PROVIDE. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONTACT WILKINS'
FATHER AS HE REQUESTED.

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